

# Why Reach Out and Read?

The American Academy of Pediatricians has stated that literacy promotion is an essential component in primary care and that Reach Out and Read is an effective means of doing it.

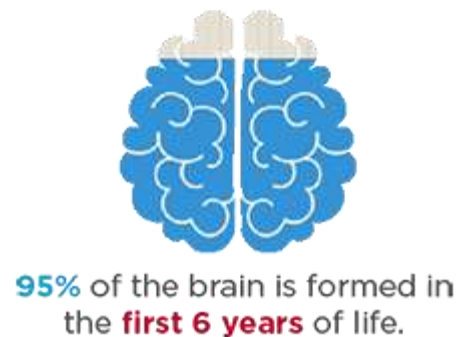
## The Achievement Gap Starts Early

A third of young children, and a half of children living in poverty, in the U.S. arrive at kindergarten without the skills that they need for success at school ( [1](#) ). Students who enter kindergarten with below grade level reading skills have a much higher chance of dropping out of school later in life ( [2](#) ). **By giving young children a foundation for success, we are combatting the effects of income inequality.**



## The Opportunity of a Lifetime

What happens during the first few years sets the stage for the rest of a child's life. More than 95 percent of a child's brain is formed during this critical period, and a child's experiences irreversibly affect how the brain develops - for better or worse ( [3](#) ).



**Positive, responsive parenting during the early years creates the strong parent-child bonds that promote healthy brain development ( [4](#) ).**

## Seizing the Moment



Reach Out and Read doctors and nurse practitioners have the greatest access to families with children in the early years, when it counts - more than 91 percent of children under the age of six attend routine pediatric visits at least once a year (5).

**We encourage parents to read aloud daily to their infants, toddlers and preschoolers, as a simple and effective way of fostering nurturing, language-rich family interactions** that support brain development and provide a foundation for success. Read more about the importance of reading aloud [here](#).

## Our Unique Model

At more than 10 routine health checkups from infancy through 5 years, Reach Out and Read-trained providers:

- **Talk with parents** about how important it is to read aloud and engage with their young children
- **Demonstrate** how best to look at books and talk about the stories with their infants, toddlers and preschoolers
- **Encourage them** to cuddle up and read together at home and build routines around books
- And then **give a new book** to the child to take home and keep



Reach Out and Read **doctors**  
encourage families to  
**read aloud** together.

**At the end of the program, every child has a home-library of books, each given with the advice to parents that they are their child's first and most important teacher.**